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Book Reviews.

Kritisch-exegetische Kommentar über das Neue Testament. Von H. D. W.

MEYER: Das Johannes-Evangelium, 8te. Auflage, neu bearbeitet von Prof. Dr. Bernhard Weiss. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1892., pp. 3+635.

The third revision of Meyer's commentary on John by Dr. Bernhard Weiss, which has just been published, is the most valuable addition to the exegesis of the Fourth Gospel in recent years. As is usually the case in German commentaries of this class, the original author is in a large degree secondary to his editor. Meyer is constantly referred to as if he were an outside authority, and his views are often pronounced untenable. Two striking illustrations are furnished by the first few pages of the exposition. On the much-debated question of the origin of John's conception of the Logos the two expositors differ very widely. Meyer maintains that the evangelist was acquainted with, and in some measure influenced by, Alexandrine speculation. Dr. Weiss cannot find the faintest trace of such influence. The diffusion of Alexandrine speculation in Asia Minor, he thinks, cannot be historically proved, and the evangelist's use of the word in his Prologue can be satisfactorily explained from his recollections of the teaching of Jesus and from the Old Testament. In v. 18 of the same chapter Dr. Weiss still adheres to the reading "only begotten God," which Meyer rejected as a dogmatic gloss appended in imitation of the first words of the Prologue. A conspicuous, and, on the whole, advantageous deviation from Meyer's method is the insertion of the textual criticism in the body of the exposition, or in foot-notes, instead of at the beginning of each chapter. There has also been considerable condensation of the matter in many places, to the reader's relief. It goes without saying, that the exegesis is invariably characterized by fine scholarship, and often by rare exegetical insight. We miss, indeed, the indefinable delicacy of spiritual intuition so often exhibited by Meyer, as we are occasionally reminded by quotations, but the editor gives so much valuable matter of his own that the loss is nearly if not quite compensated by the gain. One great question, however—the miracles of the Fourth Gospel—is treated in a very disappointing way. The reader finds it almost impossible to discover the commentator's real opinion. The cautiously-expressed suggestion that the feeding of the multitude may have been effected by the power of Jesus over the minds of those around him which induced them to give up whatever stores of food they possessed, is almost as improbable as the strange expedients to which the early rationalists

used to resort in their efforts to eliminate the miraculous from the life of Christ. The resurrection of Lazarus seems to be admitted, but the admission is coupled with the curious notion that Lazarus (as well as those whose restoration to life is recorded in the synoptic gospels) was preserved from conscious entrance into that state of being into which the human spirit usually passes when separated from the body. On the other hand, it is satisfactory to note the peremptory rejection of the theories propounded by Paulus, Strauss, and Renan respectively. Even more interesting than the exposition is the introduction, which treats of the authorship, date, purpose and nature of the Fourth Gospel. Those who are already familiar with the works of Dr. Weiss will eagerly turn to this part of the volume to ascertain the present attitude of one of the ripest living scholars to "the Johannean Question." A summary of the whole argument would occupy too much space, so that a few selected points must suffice. Speaking generally, Dr. Weiss stands where he did. Both the external evidence, which is marshalled with wonderful skill and force, and the internal evidence, endorse, to his mature judgment, the testimony of tradition that the apostle John wrote this gospel in Asia in the last quarter of the first century. The kernel of the gospel, he still believes, consists of true history and faithfully reported teaching; but the form has been in a considerable degree colored and moulded by the writer's strong individuality. No direct purpose is admitted except that plainly indicated in the gospel itself. The view which has found so much favor with modern critics, that the gospel cannot have been written by the writer of the Apocalypse, is discountenanced by Dr. Weiss. The fundamental difference between the two writings, he argues, renders close comparison inappropriate: they were separated by an interval of twenty years, during which Jerusalem was destroyed and the apostle John removed from Palestine to Asia, and, notwithstanding their radical dissimilarity, they exhibit many correspondences of thought, imagery, and expression. All this is not sufficient to prove identity of authorship, but it ought to prevent the assumption that this identity is impossible. As the work seems to have almost passed through the press at Christmas, Dr. Weiss was unable to use the newly discovered Gospel of Peter, so that we are left in ignorance of the accomplished exegete's estimate of the bearing of the document on the controversy. He claims to have consulted recent authorities as far as possible, but there is a regrettable paucity of references to works written in English; and it is rather surprising that even the famous article of Dr. Schürer seems to be ignored.

W. TAYLOR SMITH.

The Expositor's Bible: The First Book of Kings. By the Ven. Archdeacon F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1893. Pages xii. and 503. Price \$1.50.

The biblical and Christian world owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Farrar for his many valuable contributions to the better understanding of sacred literature. His mastery of the English tongue in its most fascinating forms, his prodigious